

May 30, 2011

To whom it may concern,

I have served on the San Juan County Library Board for six years and as its chairman for over two years. I am a resident of Bluff and drive 25 miles to patronize the Blanding library. Upon joining the board, it was immediately evident to me that our Blanding and Monticello libraries were in need of serious attention. To that end, we have set aside over \$200,000 over the last seven years from savings in our operating budget. We have also received over \$278,000 in grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both funds are a solid start to the \$1.5 million dollars needed to renovate both facilities.

These beautiful libraries, each in the heart of their communities, are much loved by the local citizens. In the 1950's, when San Juan County was awash in uranium revenues, county leaders had the foresight to plan for the education of this remote Utah outpost by investing in the construction of schools and libraries. Now as one of the poorest counties in the nation, the updating of these facilities presents an urgent challenge. Structural concerns include new roofs for Blanding and Monticello; ADA access to the basement in Blanding; plus safety glass and new HVAC systems for both buildings.

The buildings were originally designed with large meeting rooms on one side which, for many years, served as important community gathering space. TULIP restrictions now render these rooms virtually unusable, except for a few library-related activities. We envision our children's section expanding into that underutilized area, freeing up space in the main library for a pressing demand for increased community Internet access.

We run a tight ship, keeping our staffing needs to a minimum without sacrificing attention to our tax-paying patrons. In both facilities, the current placement of our circulation desk allows for proper supervision of only half the building. In the new plans, the circulation desk will move to the center of the library allowing for appropriate oversight of the entire library. The buildings' original layouts, while probably functional at that time, are no longer productive for a modern library.

The San Juan County Commissioners, San Juan County Economic Development, City of Monticello, City of Blanding and San Juan County Library Board are working together to make this renovation a reality for both communities. Representative Christine Watkins, a member of the Appropriations Committee, has pledged her support for this project. We have documented the cross-cultural and educational value they provide residents and visitors of San Juan County. With help from the Department of Community and Culture and the Utah State Legislature, we hope to rejuvenate these two grand old ladies into the jewels of the county they were originally intended to be.

Respectfully,

Georgiana Kennedy Simpson, Chair
San Juan County Library Board